

## 10 Antipassive

**Summary** 10.1 Background Information and Observation. – 10.2 Research.  
– 10.3 Analysis and Description.

### 10.1 Background Information and Observation

Antipassivisation is a process common in, but not exclusive to, ergative languages and it usually concerns transitive and ditransitive verbs. In a prototypical antipassive construction an original object argument of the verb is demoted to be an oblique (Payne 2006, 255). At discourse level, antipassivisation serves to de-focus an element that has low referentiality in the context. Antipassivisation is therefore similar to passivisation, the difference between the two processes being that the former downplays the centrality of an object while the latter downplays the centrality of the subject.

In both HA and SA there exists the antipassive marker *i-*. This verbal prefix is formally identical to the fourth person object marker *i-* (see Lessons 3 and 4). However, the origin of these two prefixes is diachronically distinct, with the antipassive marker being historically older than the 4O agreement prefix. A piece of evidence to argue for the older origins of the antipassive marker comes from phonology since, for reasons connected to a process of lexicalisation of the antipassive form, antipassive *i-* triggers glide insertion with vowel-initial verb stems (see Lesson 3). The 4O agreement prefix is usually not found to cause glide insertion (Tamura 1970; Bugaeva 2018, 7).

Examples (2) and (4) show an antipassive construction in HA and SA, and examples (1) and (3) respectively show their non-antipassive version.

- (1) **Mosir**    *a-hoppa*            *kusu ne.*  
**land**        4A-3S.O/leave    INTN  
 ‘I was about to leave [this] world.’ (IH 1987, line 1257)
- (2) *i-hoppa-an*            *kusu ne.*  
**AP-leave-4S**        INTN  
 ‘I was about to leave [this] world.’
- (3) *Henke*    *tani*    *‘isam*            **weepkere**    *utah*    *nuu.*  
 old.man    now    3S.S/not.be    **tale**            people    3P.A/3S.O/hear  
 ‘The people heard the news that the old mad [had] eventually died.’  
 (Dal Corso 2021, 366)
- (4) *‘Oman-hi*            *hee ka utah*    *‘erameskari*            *‘an yayne*  
 3S.S/go.PC-NMLZ    FOC    even people    3P.A/3S.O/not.know    IPFV    and.then  
*tani*    **i-nu.**  
 now    **AP-3P.S/hear**  
 ‘The people had no idea of [where the old man] went and eventually they heard  
 a news.’ (Dal Corso 2021, 366)

→ Consider this additional information...

The proposed path of development of the Ainu antipassive marker is as follows (Bugaeva 2018; 2021).

- The Ainu antipassive *i-* is traced back to the incorporation of a generic noun *hi/i* ‘fact, thing’. This noun does not exist anymore as an independent noun in Ainu, but it is retained as a nominaliser (see Lesson 15).
- The opaque semantics of this noun led the marker *i-* to refer to a generic object: an argument of the verb that has a peripheral discourse function and that can therefore be downplayed or omitted.
- The fourth person object marker *i-* would have then originated from the antipassive *i-* thanks to the referentiality properties of this latter. The reanalysis as a personal agreement marker probably started when it was necessary to avoid mentioning some speech act participants directly (out of respect or for other reasons). This hypothesis nicely explains the functions of the 4O marker to refer to the inclusive first person plural, an honorific second person, and a logophoric first person (see Lesson 3).

→ *Dataset 1 - Morphosyntactic constraints*

Examples (1)-(4) above already show a behavior of the Ainu antipassive that is at odds with the characteristics of a prototypical antipassive construction. Consider the following examples (\* marks ungrammatical examples). What is the morphosyntactic structure of the Ainu antipassive construction? What causes the ungrammaticality of examples marked with \*? Does antipassivisation affect verbal valency? How? What is the morphological evidence for that?

**Set 1.1** (Hokkaidō Ainu)

1. \**Uepekerotta inuas.*

‘We heard a news.’

2. \**Sinenne aponpohootta iyomapan.*

‘I love the child all alone.’

3. *Aponpoho aomap kusu ...*

‘Because I love our little baby ...’ (adapted from OS 1981, line 969)

4. *Uepeker cinu.*

‘We heard a news.’

5. \**Sinenne aponpoho eun iyomapan.*

‘I love the child all alone.’

6. *Sinenne iyomapan.*

‘I love the child all alone.’ (Bugueva 2018, 14)

7. *Inuas.*

‘We heard a news.’

8. \**Uepekerorwa inuas.*

‘We heard a news.’

Set 1.2 (Sakhalin Ainu)

1. \* *Sine paa tani weepelere'ohta inuan.*  
'Eventually one year we heard a news.'
2. \* *'Episkanne ciseta utara'ohta 'iwooneka.*  
'He checked on the situation of people in the houses around.'
3. *Sine paa tani inuan.*  
'Eventually one year we heard a news.'
4. *'Episkanne ciseta 'iwooneka.*  
'He checked on the situation of people in the houses around.' (Dal Corso 2021, 330)
5. \* *Sine paa tani weepelere'orowa inuan.*  
'Eventually one year we heard a news.'
6. *Sine paa tani weepelere annuu.*  
'Eventually one year we heard a news.'
7. \* *'Episkanne ciseta utara'orowa 'iwooneka.*  
'He checked on the situation of people in the houses around.'

## 10.2 Research

Now look at this other dataset and also read the examples from other languages given after it, which you will need for the third and last activity of this lesson.

→ *Dataset 2 - Antipassive's semantics*

Consider the following examples that illustrate the semantic characteristics of the Ainu antipassive and the relative translations. Judging from the grammatical and ungrammatical examples given here, how is the semantic reference of the antipassive restricted? Do the semantic restrictions of the antipassive affect the meaning of the verb form as a whole? How? Is there any difference between HA and SA? Are there any instances where the antipassive causes a morphological change of the non-antipassive base verb?

Set 2.1 (Hokkaidō Ainu)

1. *Aunuhu usey ku.*

‘My mother drinks hot water (= tea).’

2. *Hepunian wa inkar’an akus ...*

‘As I raised my head and looked around ...’ (OS 1980, line 160)

3. \**Iyomante kusu ekasi utar uwekarpa.*

Intended meaning: ‘The elders gathered to make the man go.’

4. *Ikuan wa usa sinotcakian.*

‘We drank sake and sang many songs.’ (OS 1980, line 625)

5. *Tan kamuy menoko onuytasa aomante.*

‘I made her go instead of this divine young woman.’ (OS 1988, line 839)

6. *Cep hene akoyki wa ae.*

‘I caught fish too and ate them.’ (OS 1981, line 333)

7. \**Ikuan wa usa sinotcakian.*

Intended meaning: ‘We drank tea and sang many songs.’

8. *Cikap secihiotta omante.*

‘He made the birds go to their nests.’

9. *Iyomante kusu ekasi utar uwekarpa.*

‘The elders gathered to make the [spirit of the bear] go (= to perform a bear ceremony).’

10. *Ipean wa hotkean.*

‘I ate and went to sleep.’ (OS 1980, line 552)

11. \**Secihiotta iyomante.*

Intended meaning: ‘He made the birds go to their nests.’

12. *Setane eciinukar.*

‘You saw me in the shape of a dog.’ (OS 1979, line 669)

13. *Sake aku ka eramiskari.*

'I had never drunk sake.' (IH 1986, line 482)

Set 2.2 (Sakhalin Ainu)

1. *'Ipe'an hemaka tani 'asipan.*

'I finished eating [and] at that point I went out.' (Dal Corso 2021, 412)

2. *Nay 'ururukasketa 'aa teh [...] ikuu.*

'He sat on the river bank and [...] smoked.' (Dal Corso 2021, 328)

3. *'Ikaamesu kamuy ruy kusu ...*

'Because the god who helps people (= the protective god) was strong ...'  
(Dal Corso 2021, 308)

4. *Ponno wahka kukuu.*

'I drink a little water.'

5. \* *Nay 'ururukasketa 'aa teh [...] ikuu.*

Intended meaning: 'He sat on the river bank and [...] drank water.'

6. *Cisesoykene 'inkara.*

'He had a look at the situation outside of the houses.' (Dal Corso 2021, 387)

7. *Penke 'an kuh [...] 'utarihi kasmesu.*

'The man of the upper course of the river [...] helped [his brother's] people.'  
(Dal Corso 2021, 338)

8. *Nean kamuy pooho na nukara teh ...*

'He saw that divine son of hers too and ...' (Dal Corso 2021, 296)

9. \* *'Ikaamesu kamuy ruy kusu ...*

Intended meaning: 'Because the god who helps the village was strong ...'

10. *Rukumihi pateh ku'ee.*

'I only ate a piece of it.' (Dal Corso 2021, 205)

11. *Renkayne sake ekuu?*

'Did you drink a lot of sake?' (Dal Corso 2021, 206)

12. \* *Nay* ‘ururukasketa ‘aa teh [...] *ikuu*.

Intended meaning: ‘He sat on the river bank and [...] drank sake.’

### Examples from Other Languages...

Central Alaskan Yup’ik (Eskimo-Aleut, USA)  
(examples from Miyaoka 2012)

<i>Angute-m</i>	<i>kuvya-ni</i>	<i>allg-aa</i> .
man-REL.SG	net-ABS.SG.3SG.PSR	tear-IND.3SG>3SG
‘The man tore his (own) net.’		

<i>Angun</i>	<i>kuvya-minek</i>	<i>allg-i-uq</i> .
man.ABS.SG	net-ABM.3RSG.SG	tear-ANTIP-IND.3SG
‘The man tore his (own) net.’		

A **prototypical antipassive** construction has three formal characteristics (Payne 2006, 255): 1) the A argument (subject of transitive verb) **becomes the S argument** (subject of intransitive verb), which may be clear from a **morphological change** in the person agreement forms used on the verb, 2) the originally transitive **verb becomes intransitive**, which makes antipassivisation a **valency-changing** (valency-decreasing) strategy, 3) the original object of the transitive verb appears in an **oblique case**. The Central Alaskan Yup’ik examples above illustrate a prototypical antipassive. After antipassivisation is obtained via the suffix *-i*, the formerly transitive verb becomes intransitive – this is evident from person agreement as in the first example we find the transitive agreement *-aa* (referencing to a third person subject acting on a third person object), but in the second example we find the intransitive agreement *-uq* that only references a third person subject. The subject in the antipassive construction is an S – this is evident from the absolutive null marking on *angun* ‘man’ in contrast to the relative-ergative suffix *-m* in the non-antipassive sentence. Finally, the original direct object *kuvya* ‘net’ is expressed in the antipassive construction via an oblique (here with the ablative case in *-minek*).

Puma (Sino-Tibetan, Nepal)  
(examples from Bickel, Gaenszle 2015)

*Som-kha-mΛ-tuk*.  
love-ANTIP-3PS-love.NPTS  
‘They love people.’

Antipassives can have their origin in **noun incorporation**. The antipassive *-kha* of Puma originated from a no longer existent noun meaning ‘all’ which was incorporated in the verb and later developed the function of referencing to a **generic object**. In the example above, the antipassive on the verb *som* ‘love’ references to ‘people’ in general. The peculiarity of antipassives that originate from noun incorporation seems to be that the construction **does not allow** the demoted object to be expressed overtly via an oblique. In languages possessing this kind of antipassives the demoted object is **always omitted**.

Tlachichilco Tepehua (Totonac-Tepehua, Mexico)  
(examples from Watters 2017)

<i>Sa:-y</i>	<i>Sa:-nan</i>
hit-IPFV	hit.IPFV-ANTIP
‘S/he hits him/her/it.’	‘S/he plays music.’

<i>Mispa:-y</i>	<i>Mispa:-nan</i>
know-IPFV	know.IPFV-ANTIP
‘S/he knows him/her/it.’	‘S/he knows the location.’

Antipassivisation often results in **lexicalisation**. This happens more commonly in those languages (like Puma above) whose antipassive construction does not allow the overt expression of the demoted object. Tlachichilco Tepehua represents one more case of such languages. In fact, once the antipassive is obtained via the suffix *-nVn*, object expression is blocked and the antipassive takes a **restricted set of objects** or even only **one object specifically** as its semantic referent. This often causes a **change of meaning** in the antipassivised verb form compared to the one of the non-antipassive verb. Therefore, for instance the verb form *sa:nan* from *sa:* ‘hit’ only means ‘play music’, with the antipassive referencing specifically to musical instruments.



### 10.3 Analysis and Description

Discuss, in no less than 300 words, the morphosyntactic and semantic characteristics of the Ainu antipassive. Cite relevant examples from Set 1 and Set 2 where needed.

- From what premises did your analysis start?
- Do HA and SA feature a prototypical antipassive construction? Why/why not? Motivate your answer.
- How does antipassivisation affect verbal valency?
- Is the semantic reference of the antipassive limited? How? How does this affect the overall meaning of the antipassive verb form?
- What are the differences between HA and SA?

